

Nerve Block Injections

More information is available at <http://www.fpmx.com.au/frankston-pain-management-services.html>

Q1 What is a nerve block?

Nerve blocks are injections of anaesthetic and/or steroid performed around a nerve supplying the painful area (target structure) to determine if it is the origin of the pain.

Q2 What is the purpose of a nerve block?

Nerve blocks may be diagnostic by confirming the origin of the pain. They may also be therapeutic in some patients by providing sustained pain relief and functional improvement by breaking the pain cycle and reducing inflammation around the affected nerve.

Q3 How is the injection done?

After numbing the skin, nerve blocks (with or without sedation), are performed using ultrasound, fluoroscopy (xray) to guide needle and anaesthetic/steroid placement.

Q4 What is the expected outcome?

Pain relief! This is initially due to the injected local anaesthetic. If the injection relieves the patient's pain, the pain was probably coming from the injected nerve. The steroid also helps reduce inflammation around the nerve in the following days. Pain relief may last a few days, weeks or many months. Some common effects of the local anaesthetic are temporary weakness, numbness or tingling on the affected side, 1-2 weeks injection site tenderness.

Q5 What are the Risks?

There is a small risk of bleeding, infection, and nerve damage, however the vast majority of patients do not have any complications. Side effects from the injected steroid may include weight gain, increased blood sugar, fluid retention and immune suppression.

Q6 How many injections will be needed?

If the injection does not fully relieve the symptoms in a week or two, a second injection or different treatment may be recommended. If you get 2+ months pain relief and use this to improve your exercise and mobility, you can have 3-4 injections per year or more if steroids are not used with each injection.

Q7 What should I do after the procedure?

We advise patients to take it easy until the numbing medicine has worn off, then you can perform activity as tolerated. You may need someone to drive you home after some nerve blocks.

Q8 Can I go to work the next day?

Yes. Unless there are complications, you should be able to return to your work the next day. The most common thing you may feel is injection site soreness. Ice at the injection site will help with the soreness. You may also take ibuprofen or paracetamol for the discomfort.

Q9 What do I do next?

*The aim of the nerve block is to reduce your pain and to allow a graded exercise program (eg 10,000 step walking program). **The nerve block alone is not much use and you need to work hard** at improving your exercise level and mobility for any benefits to be gained and sustained. If pain relief is short lived, we will discuss the option of radiofrequency or stimulation treatments at review.*

Important Notes:

You must not eat/drink for 4 hours before the procedure.

Please take your normal medicines with a sip of water except blood thinners (aspirin is OK), insulin and diabetic tablets.